

Department of Natural Resources Results of Budget Reductions July 2009 through October 2010

- 245 vacancies are being carried. This is 29% of the agency's authorized FTEs. 95 of these are law enforcement officers, leaving four counties with only one officer and one county without any officers.
- Terminated 19 hourly employees.
- Twice implemented Reduction-In-Force that resulted in 12 terminations, one demotion and one reassignment.
- Offered retirement and voluntary separation packages which resulted in 63 participants leaving the agency.
- Working towards moving "draw hunts" to an all electronic process.
- All agency boats are being operated at 2/3 power/speed unless under emergency response.
- Closed internal printshop
- Discontinued South Carolina Wildlife ETV program.
- Continued mileage restriction for Law Enforcement Officers.
- Purchase of new equipment has been greatly reduced to all but the most critical pieces.
- Eliminated minority intern program.
- Reduced agency support for Camp Wildwood and other education programs.
- Eliminated the website "forum".
- Made all mailer forms one standard size. Used a new bidding process (reversed auction) and reduced the cost of license mailers by \$12,000.00.
- Reduced funding to the Conservation Districts by 9%.
- Five public dove fields were eliminated. Other dove fields less intensively managed.
- Reduction of wildlife plantings on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's).
- Limited vehicle access on some WMA's
- Reduced the number of Deputy Law Enforcement Officers available for emergency services — lane reversal and traffic control.

Department of Natural Resources Results of Budget Reductions FY03 through June 30, 2009

- Realignment of state lakes maintenance crews into one unit.
- Realignment of state fish hatchery operations increasing federal funding and reducing line supervision.
- Consolidation of law enforcement and wildlife/ fisheries storage facilities.
- Merged wildlife management and wildlife diversity sections.
- Merged Heritage Trust with habitat protection office.
- Consolidated nine district offices into four regional hubs. Reduced the number of CPT's and LT's by 6 as a result of consolidation.
- Merged Marine Public Affairs Section with the Coastal Reserves Section under one manager. Reduced the number of higher level managers by one position.
- Merged Habitat Protection, Conservation Districts, Aquatic Nuisance Species, Environmental Programs, Flood Mitigation and Laboratory Services under one manager. Reduced the number of higher level managers by one position.
- Acquisition of freshwater fisheries grants totaling over 2 million dollars.
- Acquisition of 3.75 million dollars in funding for the St. Stephen Fish Lift.
- Consolidated hatchery production into major hatcheries with focus on limited number of priority species.
- Increased collaborative activities with universities, government agencies and public utilities.
- Increased partnership with Georgia DNR in trout production by providing surplus fish in return for manpower assistance during spawning season.
- Three northern coastal waterfowl management areas been placed under the supervision of one biologist.
- Outside funding secured from the Corps of Engineers to support the operation of an office in Greenwood.
- Licensing and boating services phased out in all locations except Hub Offices.
- As a customer courtesy, the Columbia and Charleston offices take credit cards for licensing and boating transactions.
- Created a "one stop shop" for all boating and licensing transactions in the Columbia office.
- Made purchasing licenses more convenient for customers by offering a direct mail license promotion.
- Reorganization of Law Enforcement eliminated a Major position.
- Discontinued intern program with Clemson University.
- Discontinued technical assistance to private pond owners.
- Discontinued the sale of fish to private pond owners.
- Permanently closed two fish hatcheries.
- Eliminated Devine Street Office and merged staff into existing space in the Dennis Building.
- Discontinued direct map services to the public and enhanced internet/GIS availability of maps.
- Reduced conservation district staff and consolidated responsibilities for reduced staffing.
- Eliminated all state appropriated funding from South Carolina Wildlife magazine.
- Bid the hunting & fishing rules & regulations to vendors who sell ads to reduce the cost of printing.
- Less expensive paper used in the production of the rules & regulations, Wildlife Management (WMA) maps, turkey regulations and migratory bird regulations.

Department of Natural Resources

Results of Budget Reductions

FY03 through June 30, 2009

- Merged administrative support functions (procurement and human resources) in Charleston with the same functions in the Columbia headquarters.
- Merged Supply/Equipment with Procurement Services allowing the agency to provide these services under the direction of one mid-level manager instead of two.
- Officially merged two support divisions under one deputy director.
- Entered into a joint aircraft program with SLED-DNR operating fixed wing aircraft and SLED operating helicopter.
- Sold one fixed wing aircraft.
- Shifted activities (where possible) to grant and other funding sources.
- Established ocean going research vessels as cost centers - no state appropriated dollars are used to support vessel operations.
- "Internalized" travel cost by charging uniform mileage rate to all federal projects.
- Identified source of federal funds to support all marine fuel costs.
- Eliminated the DNR supply room and moved purchases to procurement cards.
- Changed funding sources on other positions from general funds to revenue and from general funds to Federal funds. Done to maximize match leverage.
- Offered retirement and voluntary separation packages which resulted in 136 participants leaving the agency.
- Closed the Conway customer service office.
- Began video conferencing between Columbia and Charleston Offices to reduce travel.
- Reduced active management for three legislatively approved State Scenic Rivers by 75%.
- Reduced operating expenses with USGS by 29% by eliminating support of 10 groundwater and 3 surface water monitoring stations.
- Merged the Flood Mitigation program within the Hydrology Section to more effectively use technical and administrative staff expertise in both water-related programs.
- Began collaborating with USGS and DHEC in ground water monitoring statewide to provide cost savings in personnel, equipment and data management.
- Initiated volunteer climate data gathering network instead of installing planned automated climate data network.
- The Wood Duck Box Program reduced to distribution of existing units carried over from previous years. State Waterfowl stamp funds that would have been used to construct wood duck boxes were utilized for DNR waterfowl management area operations.
- Annual biologist and technician meetings have been curtailed to save travel costs.
- Out-of-state travel has been all but eliminated.
- Infrastructure projects delayed, other than those previously funded through supplemental appropriations.
- Significantly reduced the use of fixed phone lines from Communications Center in Columbia to repeater sites located throughout the state with a combination of using a micro-wave CANOPY system and Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) system. The reduction in fixed phone lines will generate approximately \$80,000 in savings annually.
- Updated High Band VHF communications system (technology in old system dated back 20 plus years) with new technology to improve signal clarity and security of communications. There are minimal monthly services fee's associated with this system.

Department of Natural Resources Results of Budget Reductions FY03 through June 30, 2009

- By utilizing DNR personnel (one Motorola trained technician and one assistant) to install and program much of the up-dated system hardware and software improvements, the agency saved approximately \$750,000 over the last two years verses having this work done by private contractors.
- In-service and other training has been moved from the SCCJA to the regions in an effort to reduce the amount of time that officers are away from their assigned areas of work and reduce costs associated with travel to Columbia.
- Made the transition from ½ ton trucks to ¾ ton trucks that are assigned to Field Officers. This move was made in response to numerous maintenance issues (transmissions, transfer cases, brakes, etc.) that were experienced as result of towing large boats and other equipment. The initial cost to up-grade to the ¾ ton was minimal (generally less than \$1,000 per vehicle), however, the costs for major repairs and vehicle down-time have been significantly reduced.
- In-line with manufactures recommendations increased routine vehicle service from 3,000 to 5,000 mile intervals.
- Maintain minimal levels of supplies, uniforms and accessories in the Law Enforcement Supply Room. Consolidate purchases whenever possible to maximize savings from bulk purchases, utilize State contracts, GSA contracts and other bids processes to obtain the best prices possible for goods and services.
- Seek and utilize Law Enforcement Federal grants as available to fund equipment purchases. Recently obtained a grant to purchase a Computer Aided Dispatch system for Communications Center that will help monitor officer activity to better serve the public in reduced response time to calls for service and enhance officer safety. Also purchased a Records Management System that will allow for efficient utilization, storage and transfer of information within the division/agency and with agencies that are authorized access to this data.
- Example of position classifications lost during this time frame include: senior marine scientist, economist, biologist, public information coordinators, graphic artists, hydrologists, geologists, technicians and law enforcement officers.
- Discontinued outreach programs to include “Becoming an Outdoors Woman” and school animal programs.

Issues With Unwinding Conservation Law Enforcement from DNR

General Information:

As I recently told a roomful of people gathered in Columbia to honor our 2010 South Carolina Natural Resources Law Enforcement Officers of the Year, make no mistake about it, our agency's law enforcement division is our number one wildlife management tool. Truly effective protection and conservation of our natural resources – our state's most valuable asset – is a collaborative effort, and for that effort to be successful, relationships matter. Our agency's scientists, land managers and game biologists could not effectively fulfill their mandate as advocates for and steward of our state's natural resources without our dedicated corps of conservation officers, and the reverse is also true; Our DNR law enforcement officers would be less effective in their jobs without the benefit of the solid working relationships they have with DNR scientists, land managers, biologists and program staff.

Natural Resources Conservation Officers are somewhat unique among other law enforcement professionals in that, rather than being strictly enforcers of private property rights or the laws promulgated by the state (such as speed limits), they also share a responsibility for protecting a "common property" that belongs to all of our citizens – the fish, game, land and water resources held jointly by all South Carolinians and passed from generation to generation. Most of our officers chose this career for the same reason I chose to become a wildlife biologist – because they have a deep-seated love of the land and the wild places and wild things that make our state special. It's not a "one-size-fits-all" kind of job, and the day-to-day contact and working relationships that our officers have with the professional staff in the DNR's other divisions helps foster a deep knowledge and fundamental understanding of the task at hand. Those relationships and that understanding have a tremendous impact on the way that our natural resources law enforcement officers approach their jobs. It is one thing to simply be an enforcer of the laws of the land. It is quite another to take on the task of forging the kinds of long-term, ongoing relationships with private landowners and managers of public lands that result in a truly effective conservation strategy on a statewide level. We need to think long and hard before dismantling one of the key factors that has made our efforts in that regard so successful.

Specifics:

FTEs - Questions about filled and unfilled FTEs in the Law Enforcement division.

- Would all filled and unfilled JC series FTEs automatically be moved to the new agency, including the UA position occupied by the Colonel/Deputy Director?
- Would all filled and unfilled Law Enforcement administrative FTEs move with the JC/UA FTEs?
- Would the hourly Dispatchers and Radio Systems staff move with the JC/UA FTEs?

- Supply specialists at the Styx Receiving Compound staff perform agency wide functions, would they move with the JC/UA FTEs?
- Would some number of other agency wide support functions (Human Resources, Procurement, Accounts Payable, Legal, Information Technology, Grants Management, Graphics) filled or unfilled FTEs be expected to transfer with the JC/US FTEs.

DLEOs - Questions about Deputy Law Enforcement Officers in other DNR divisions.

- Would the DLEO program continue?
- Would current DLEOs lose their commission?
- Would the appointment of a DLEO reside with the new agency or remain with the DNR Director?

Integration of Law Enforcement Roles - Questions involving the relationship between Law Enforcement roles other DNR divisions.

- Would titling and registration of watercraft and outboard motor investigations be directed by the new agency or remain with DNR?
- Would the permitting of marine dealers reside with the new agency or with the Titling & Registration program at DNR?
- Would changes to patrols on Heritage Trust properties, Wildlife Management Areas, state lakes and reservoirs and Scenic Rivers be forthcoming?
- Would violations of administrative requirements for commercial saltwater fisheries, charter boat operators and saltwater fishing pier licenses and permits continue to be handled by the new agency?

Federal Grants - Questions involving the administration and implementation of grants involving Law Enforcement.

- Hunter Education grants are administered by through the US Dept of the Interior's Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program. These funds are allocated to states based in part on recreational hunting & fishing licenses issued. This grant funding would probably be required to be distributed through DNR although an opinion would be sought from USFWS Grants Administration to confirm. Would Hunter Education continue to be administered by the new agency as sub-recipient using commissioned officers or by DNR without commissioned officers?
- US Coast Guard Boating Safety grants support a portion of the Watercraft/Outboard Motor Titling & Registration (T&R) program. This allows DNR to maximize use of the T&R funds in areas of the agency not eligible to use hunting & fishing license/permit revenue. Would DNR T&R be allowed to become a sub-recipient of Boating Safety grant funding?

- There are a number of grants that are awarded to the law enforcement division. If it is determined that the rewards need to be revised reflecting the new agency, would any personnel associated with the grant be transferred to the new agency? Who makes the determination as to which grants remain with DNR and which move to the new agency?
- Would indirect costs recovered during the most recent FY stay with DNR or be moved with any grant administration personnel?

Revenue - Issues pertaining to earmarked and restricted revenue.

- Drew's Law revenue (earmarked) derived from Watercraft title and registration fees is allocated between Law Enforcement and T&R. Would the law need to be rewritten or will these funds automatically be transferred to the new agency on an agreed upon schedule?
- A portion of antlerless deer tag, shrimp baiting and saltwater recreational license revenue (restricted) is specifically allocated to Law Enforcement. No other portion of license revenue is specifically dedicated to enforcement activities, although enforcement does use some of this revenue. US Dept of Interior Office of Inspector General audits of the transfer of these funds to another agency could be interpreted as a loss of DNR control by and receive a diversion of funds finding.
- County Game & Fish funds (restricted) are composed of fish & wildlife fines and a portion of the annual nonresident freshwater fishing license fee. These funds are not exclusively used by the Law Enforcement division. Would the statutes need to be rewritten and the composition of this fund changed accordingly? Would the fund remain with DNR or move to the new agency? If the fund transfers to the new agency, the same DOI-OIG diversion of funds audit finding may occur with the license fee portion.
- Water Recreation funds (earmarked) - 1/3 may be allocated to enforcement and aquatic weed control. This portion is divided between these programs within DNR. Would this statute need further clarification as to exactly how much must go to Law Enforcement?

Property/Facilities - Issues pertaining to acquisition funding for property, facilities and equipment.

- Equipment –vehicles, uniforms, accessories – a determination needs to be made as to how each piece was obtained. Reassignment of equipment obtained using restricted revenue or USFWS grant funding to the new agency could be a DOI-OIG loss of control audit finding. The new agency may need to buy the current equipment from DNR.
- Law Enforcement occupies DNR facilities in Clemson, York, Florence, Columbia, Georgetown and Bluffton. Depending on how the facility was acquired by DNR, the Law Enforcement portion may need to be rented or otherwise purchased by the new agency from DNR.